REMARKS

At the time of the Office Action November 13, 2007, claims 2-27 were pending in this application. Of those claims, claims 25-27 have been withdrawn from consideration pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.142(b).

In this Amendment, claim 2 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 24, and claim 24 canceled. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter. Therefore, the present Amendment does not generate any new matter or any new issue for that matter. Accordingly, entry of the present Amendment is solicited pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.116.

Claims 2-23 are now active in this application, of which claim 2 is independent.

Claims 2-4, 6, 13, 15, and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al.

In the statement of the rejection, the Examiner asserted that Kamiya et al. discloses a process for fabricating an optical fiber identically corresponding to what is claimed.

Applicants submit that Kamiya et al. does not identically disclose a method of producing an optical fiber including all the limitations recited in independent claim 2. Specifically, the reference does not disclose, at a minimum, "in the collapsing step, the absolute pressure in the glass pipe is maintained at 4 kPa or below," as recited in claim 2.

Kamiya et al. discloses pressure as a value relative to the atmospheric pressure. The value described in Kamiya et al. is 0 to -22 mmH_2O (see column 2, lines 39-50 and Fig. 3). Because the atmospheric pressure is expressed as 101.325 kPa or 10332 mmH_2O as an absolute pressure, relative pressures of 0 mmH_2O and -22 mmH_2O are expressed as absolute pressures of 101.325 kPa and

$\frac{10332-22}{10332}$ x 101.325 = 101.109 kPa, respectively. In a glass pipe in the collapsing step disclosed by Kamiya is nearly the atmospheric pressure.

In contrast, claim 2 recites that the absolute pressure in the glass pipe is maintained at 4 kPa or below. H_2O has a saturated vapor pressure of 4 kPa at a temperature of 25 °C. When the internal pressure of the glass pipe is reduced to 4 kPa or below, the desorption of H_2O can be promoted. Furthermore, the reduction in the internal pressure can increase the mean free path for H_2O and therefore reduce the possibility of its collision onto the wall of the glass. As a result, the re-absorption of H_2O onto the surface of the glass can be significantly suppressed. See the second full paragraph on page 12 of the specification.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants submit that Kamiya et al. does not identically disclose a method of producing an optical fiber including all the limitations recited in independent claim 2. Dependent claims 3, 4, 6, 13, and 15 are also patentably distinguishable over Kamiya et al. at least because these claims respectively include all the limitations recited in independent claim 2. The rejection of claim 24 has been rendered moot by the cancellation of the claim. Applicants, therefore, respectfully solicit withdrawal of the rejection of the claims and favorable consideration thereof.

Claims 5, 7-12, 14, and 16-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) (paragraphs 9-16).

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of DiGiovanni et al.; claims 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of Barns et al.; claims 9, 11, and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of Onishi et

al.; claims 10 and 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of Kunio et al.; claim 14 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of Homa; claim 16 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of Chang et al.; claims 17-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of Homa and Yokota et al.; and claims 21 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamiya et al. in view of DiGiovanni et al.

Claims 5, 7-12, 14, and 16-23 depend from independent claim 2. Applicants incorporate herein the arguments made in responding to the rejection of independent claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §103 for obviousness predicated upon Kamiya et al. The Examiner's additional comments and secondary reference to DiGiovanni et al., Barns et al., Onishi et al., Kunio et al., Homa, Chang et al., and Yokota et al. do not cure the deficiencies of Kamiya et al.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully solicit withdrawal of the rejection of the claims and favorable consideration thereof.

Conclusion

It should, therefore, be apparent that the imposed rejections have been overcome and that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Favorable consideration is, therefore, respectfully solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper,

including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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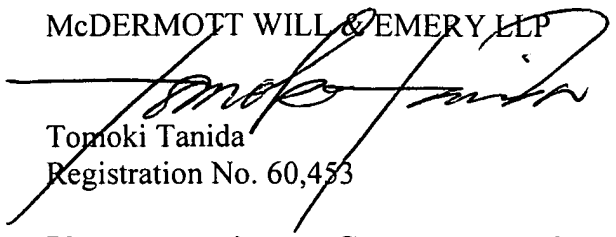

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